

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: The Office of Communications Career Service

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At my request, Mr. [redacted], Chief, Career Management Staff, OC, met and discussed the OC Career Service with particular reference to the development of young professionals and OC policy in this regard.

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[redacted] was informed at the outset that the OP/Plans Staff was studying certain personnel management questions which could pose potential problems for OC. These questions had to do with the advisability of re-instituting the two step promotion policy for young professional personnel and/or reducing the time-in-grade average between promotions for those viewed as professional career employees.

By and large the bulk of OC personnel input is technical in classification. OC professional employees are largely hired in the engineering sub-career service. Most of these technical personnel are hired below the basic grade level of the job and are treated non-competitively until they reach this level. Consequently radio operators and technicians, for example, are promoted from GS-7 to the GS-9 level against performance standards rather than against each other. Professionals, on the other hand, are hired at the lowest grade level of their occupational speciality (although OC does hire some at higher grade levels) and are promoted a step at a time but at an accelerated rate. In other words, Grades 8 and 10 are just temporary and programmed stops between Grades 7 and 11 wherein no additional performance evaluation is made and promotions are effected automatically.

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Following the meeting Mr. [redacted] telephoned to change the emphasis he had made during our discussion as to the affect the two grade promotion policy would have on OC personnel. Initially, Mr. [redacted] was inclined to believe that all would go reasonably well after a period of adjustment. He pointed out that technician personnel were prone to take particular note of policy changes that affected others in a beneficial way. Mr. [redacted] thought that since this had been an ongoing phenomenon for some years one more incident wouldn't cause permanent damage. Subsequently, he changed his mind and stressed that the large body of technical personnel would view themselves as a conspicuous minority discriminated against by the Agency and could very well hold this grievance for a protracted period. The manner and skill employed in implementing the two step promotion policy would be a big factor in determining the magnitude of the response from those exempt from the policy was a fact appreciated by the both of us.

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Time-in-grade studies have not been undertaken by OC since its promotion panels meet annually and routinely consider this factor. The number of promotions granted at any specific session of a panel is determined by the CSGA which is kept current on a monthly basis. Career dev-

elopment is projected for about a three to five year time period, i.e., there is no effort to identify long range placement possibilities much beyond this time-frame.

It was brought out that the OC Career Service is faced with the possible loss of nearly 50% of its super-grade officers in the next five or six years. [redacted] admitted that OC management was concerned about this and was busy identifying replacement possibilities. In this regard Mr. [redacted] noted that OC didn't have much of a "pool" to draw from and that some of OC's better looking prospects were fairly junior in both age and grade. However, there was no suggestion that OC would be unable to meet the problem.

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A final note of significance was the observation of Mr. [redacted] that the middle level officer in OC was becoming somewhat demoralized because of what appeared to be growing Agency disregard of his feelings and expectations. A recent revision of admittance standards by the Office of Training for the Mid-Career Course was cited as a case in point. Mr. [redacted] said that the cut-off age of 40 years hurt the middle aged employee having some 10 to 15 years of productive employment remaining. Too much attention has been focused on the young new employee to the neglect of those having proven themselves as competent and loyal workers in the Agency over an extended period. Since my discussion with Mr. [redacted] did focus on the new employee it was apparent to me that Mr. [redacted] saw the truth in complaints of this type. In view of the fact that many high calibre middle level employees have many years of Agency service remaining, their continued development and high morale is a matter of concern to OC top management, and should be to the Agency's at large.

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[redacted]
OP/Plans Staff